

Libya asks U.S., Britain to join probe

CAIRO (R) — Libya has invited U.S. and British judges to join its investigation of charges that two Libyan intelligence agents blew up a Pan Am plane over Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people. Libya has been trying to fend off American and British threats of retaliation for the bombing by making various offers of cooperation — but has refused to consider the two countries' central demand for the extradition of the two men. A Libyan foreign ministry statement distributed in Cairo on Monday said Libya had appointed a judge to investigate the charges against its citizens and "accepts that judges are conducted clearly and soundly." It said victims' families and human rights organisations could send observers or lawyers to attend the inquiry. Diplomatic sources said Egypt, which is close to the United States but also on good terms with its neighbour in North Africa, had urged Libya to react "positively" to the Western accusations. "Hence that the United States might take military action against Libya, as it did in 1986 after accusing Libya of bombing a Berlin discotheque used by American servicemen, alarmed Egypt into a flurry of diplomacy" (see page 2).

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Israeli allies shell villages

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli-backed militia shelled villages in South Lebanon on Sunday after a bomb attack, military sources said. The bombardment by the South Lebanon Army (SLA) followed an attempt to blow up an SLA unit near Deir Siryan in the central sector of Israel's self-declared "security zone," the sources said. The militiamen were defusing a large bomb when guerrillas set off a second device, they said. About 1,000 Israeli soldiers and the 3,000-strong SLA patrol the 15 kilometre deep zone, set up in 1985 to prevent guerrilla attacks across the Jewish state's northern border.

Syrian vice-president met Arafat in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — Syrian Vice-President Rifaat Al Assad made a surprise visit to Tunis at the weekend to confer with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, a diplomatic source said Monday. Mr. Assad, brother of the Syrian president, arrived late on Saturday to discuss coordination between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Syria before Middle East peace talks due to open in Washington on Wednesday, the source said. He met Mr. Arafat a few hours before the PLO leader was due to travel to Cairo and Amman.

Gonzalez arrives in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez of Spain arrived in Israel early on Monday on the first visit by a Spanish head of government to the Jewish state. Mr. Gonzalez, who hosted historic Middle East peace talks in Madrid a month ago, will urge Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to stop settlements in the occupied territories and offer "land for peace" to Palestinians, Spanish officials said. Mr. Gonzalez will also meet leading Palestinian nationalist Faisal Al Hussein and opposition leader Shimon Peres, the officials said. He returns to Madrid Tuesday.

Saudi elected chief of ISESCO

RABAT (R) — Abdelaziz Ben Ouhman Toudji of Saudi Arabia was elected director-general of the Islamic Education, Science and Culture Organisation (ISESCO) at its annual general meeting in Rabat at the weekend. He replaces Abdul Hadi Boutaleb of Morocco. Since 1985 Mr. Toudji, 41, has been deputy director-general of ISESCO, an arm of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) which is due to hold a summit in Dakar next week.

Iran executes cleric for sabotage, spying

TEHRAN (R) — Iran has executed a Muslim cleric convicted of spying for Baghdad and a spate of bombings in Tehran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, a newspaper reported. Resalat newspaper said Sunday that Mullah Rafiq Sadeqi, 45, was born in Iraqi Kurdistan and returned there in 1980 to join an Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrilla group which carried out cross-border bombings and sabotage. Arrested in September, he confessed to spying, bombings in Tehran, attacks against Iranian troops and setting fire to harvests in Iranian Kurdistan, the paper said.

London shops on alert as IRA flexes muscles

LONDON (R) — London shops went on the alert for a possible Christmas bombing blitz by Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas Monday after a wave of fire-bombs at furniture stores in the British capital. Detectives said the IRA, fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland, had flamed its missiles on mainland Britain after two of its guerrillas were killed by their own bomb last month. The police warned the public to take care. "We warn people to be particularly vigilant whether they are shopkeepers, train-drivers, housewives or schoolchildren," said a spokesman at Scotland Yard police headquarters.

Joint delegation heads for U.S. after wrangle over visa

Negotiators carry 'spirit of Madrid' to Washington

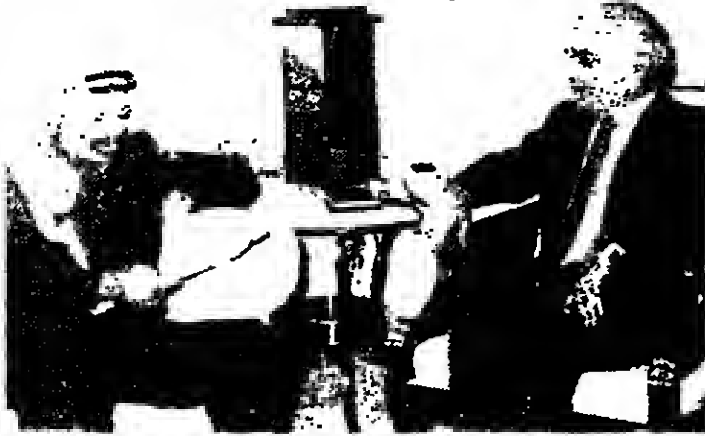
By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks left for Washington Monday evening after a 10-hour delay caused by a wrangle over American visas for some of the advisors for the Palestinian negotiators. It was not immediately known whether and what form of a compromise was reached between the Palestinians and the U.S. administration, but all indications were that the Palestinians had resigned to accepting the American position over visas for any member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as advisor to the delegates.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi described the dispute as a "form of political pressure."

An American embassy spokesman declined to make any comment whatsoever.

Informed sources said at least two Palestinians who were expelled from the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities were granted visas but the applications of an unknown number of others — known members of the PLO — were pending. The two were identified as Tayseer Arouri, a member of the Palestinian Fed-



His Majesty King Hussein Monday meets with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (Petra photo)

eration (communist) Party — a PLO faction — and Akram Haniyeh, a journalist who was ousted by the occupation authorities for alleged links with the PLO.

Among those who were not issued a visa Monday were Nabil Shat, a close advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, and PLO spokesman Ahmad Abdul Rahman, according to the sources. Others whose applications were also pending included Mahmud Darwish, a renowned Palestinian poet, Mamdouh Nofal, a member of the Yasser Abed

during which top-level consultations were held involving His Majesty King Hussein and Mr. Arafat, it was announced by Dr. Ashrawi around 6 p.m. that the Palestinians had decided to go ahead after resolving part of the problem.

"There are some cases that will be pursued and some were resolved," Dr. Ashrawi told a hastily-called press conference. In carefully worded phrases, Dr. Ashrawi presented a business-as-usual situation but it was evident, according to analysts, that the Palestinians had decided that it would be against their interests at this point in time to pursue the issue further.

"We are not going to Washington to place obstacles or waste time," said Dr. Ashrawi. "We are going to Washington with the same spirit as Madrid," where the Middle East peace conference opened Oct. 30.

In answer to a question, Dr. Ashrawi said there was no response whatsoever to the Palestinian request for protection against post-Madrid Israeli harassment. If anything, she said, "they appear to send a message to the Palestinians: 'You have opted for peace and peace is going to be

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Peace process headed for impasse over Israeli stand

From Ghadeer Taher
in Washington

THE MIDDLE East peace process appeared to be heading for an impasse Monday, with no visible indication of Israel relenting on its hard line stance against peace talks here Wednesday but all the Arab delegations expected to arrive here Tuesday.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutweiler told reporters Monday afternoon that she was not aware of any change in Israel's position that it would attend the talks Dec. 9 — five days after the date set by the U.S. in letters of invitation sent to all parties involved.

Ms. Tutweiler also told a State Department press briefing that she did not have any information that a low-level Israeli delegation would be here Wednesday. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due in Washington Tuesday, but Ms. Tutweiler said Israel had said that his visit was not related to the

second round of bilateral talks, which were launched in Madrid with the opening of the Middle East peace conference Oct. 30.

Echoing the words of President George Bush, Ms. Tutweiler said: "On Wednesday morning we will be open and ready for business. We made a proposal for venue and date in good faith after the parties themselves could not agree and we have an obligation to follow through with our proposal."

The departure from Amman of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation was delayed by over 10 hours after dispute arose over American visas for Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) advisors to the Palestinians (see separate story).

Ms. Tutweiler said she was not aware that Nabil Shat, a close advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, had actually requested an American visa "to come at this time... I am aware of press reports of course."

"All I can say is that the Palestinians are on their way,"

she said.

The spokeswoman said no final decision had been made where to actually hold the bilateral talks. Many officials, including Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, were continuing consultations over the issue.

The Israelis have asked the Americans that the bilateral talks take place at different sites and timings in a clear effort to minimise consultations among the Arab delegations, according to informed sources.

The sources said Israel had apparently rejected a set of "assurances" that Washington had provided in response to a specific Israeli request. The "assurances" — or rather "broad principles/proposals" — said the sources, involved:

— The U.S. believes that all subjects should be discussed during the bilateral;

— The U.S. encourages direct

(Continued on page 2)

Kidnappers free hostage; Iran says others out soon

DAMASCUS (R) — Kidnappers freed U.S. hostage Joseph Cicippio in Lebanon Monday after five years' captivity and Iran said a deal had been struck to release all four remaining Western hostages soon.

Mr. Cicippio, a 61-year-old accountant, headed for a family reunion in Damascus, amid signs the seven-year hostage crisis will end before Christmas.

He was the seventh man to walk free in a U.N.-mediated drive since August to release prisoners held by pro-Iranian Lebanese groups and Israel.

Iran, seeking international goodwill after years of isolation, joined United Nations efforts.

Tehran State radio said Mr. Cicippio and the remaining two American and two German hostages were being freed under a deal reached in Damascus Saturday.

Western governments had promised not to retaliate against the pro-Iranian kidnappers. In a commentary shortly after Mr. Cicippio's release in Beirut, the radio referred to an "unpre-

cedented" hostage release deal clinched after secret U.N. mediation in the Syrian capital on Saturday night (see page 2).

Mr. Cicippio left Syria later Monday for a U.S. military hospital in Germany, evening airport sources said.

Accompanied by his Lebanese-born wife, Etham, Mr. Cicippio was being flown to Wiesbaden on a special U.S. military flight.

Mr. Cicippio, thin and tense but looking spruce in a suit, was handed to the U.S. ambassador in Damascus at the Syrian Foreign Ministry, diplomats said.

Syria's Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said the last two American hostages, journalist Terry Anderson and Alann, Stoen, a university professor, would be freed within a week.

Mr. Cicippio, threatened with execution in captivity, was being reunited with his Lebanese wife to whom he once videotaped a poignant farewell message.

"Goodbye my love," he said to the camera. Looking gaunt and haggard, he added: "If you don't hear my voice and see my face

again I want you to look after yourself and don't be sad... and always remember me."

Tehran Radio said Mr. Cicippio's captors, the Revolutionary Justice Organisation (RJO), had received during the Damascus talks a videotape of a Lebanese Shiite Muslim cleric Israel seized in 1989.

Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid was held for use as a bargaining chip in prisoner exchange deals. So far, Israel has freed some 100 Arab prisoners taken from Lebanon and returned the bodies of nine Lebanese guerrillas. Arab groups have returned the bodies of two Israeli servicemen to the Jewish state.

In his first public words after 1,906 days cut off from the world, Mr. Cicippio said: "I am happy it's over and I would like to put it all behind me. I would like to get on to the first day of my new life."

He had not seen a newspaper or magazines for five years. He had been moved constantly

(Continued on page 2)

14 arrested in Algerian killings

ALGIERS (R) — Security forces hunting the killers of three Algerian border guards have arrested 14 people, the defence minister said Monday. The Algerian news agency, quoting the ministry, said some arms seized by a 60-strong band that attacked the southeastern border post before dawn on Friday had also been recovered. Special troops and national police, backed by helicopters, are hunting the group, said to be led by an Islamist extremist named Aissa Messoudi who is also known as Teyeb the Afghan because of his frequent visits to Afghanistan. The attackers, shouting Allahu Akbar, seized arms and ammunition during the raid on the border post, a communication centre, at Guemmar, some 70 kilometres from the Tunisian border. Three guards had their throats cut by the attackers. Five guards were wounded, as was one attacker who was captured. The attack has produced widespread media comments about possible destabilisation of the country as it heads into its first multi-party general elections due on Dec. 26. Just before Friday's raid police said they were hunting 20-strong gang led by Teyeb which they said planned anti-state terrorism.



His Majesty King Hussein Monday confers with Osama Al Baz, political advisor to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, in a meeting attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (Petra photo)

King receives Egyptian message

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a verbal message from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The message, delivered by Osama Al Baz, director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs, dealt with relations between Jordan and Egypt, the situation in the Middle East

and the peace process, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Adnan Aln Odeh and the Egyptian ambassador in Amman attended the King's meeting with Dr. Baz. Dr. Baz's visit marks a sharp

improvement in ties between the two countries whose relations worsened by conflicting stands in the Gulf crisis by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Sources quoted by Reuters said the King may visit Cairo on his way to Senegal for a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference next week.

Israel says Dec. 4 boycott because of U.S. proposals

TEL AVIV (R) — A key aide to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Monday Israel would boycott this week's start of Middle East peace talks, mainly because it objected to U.S. ideas on how to reach a settlement.

Yossi Ben Aharon, probably the most influential of Mr. Shamir's advisers, dismissed fears Israel would suffer a propaganda defeat by failing to appear on Wednesday and said Washington had to understand Israel will not accept terms it does not like.

Mr. Ben Aharon told Reuters Israel would have "some representation" at talks next Monday — five days after the scheduled start — but still wanted a U.S. response to Israel's terms.

"The idea of starting talks without us isn't serious," Mr. Ben Aharon earlier told Israeli Television. "After all they can't do anything without us."

Israel had objected to a Dec. 4 resumption of talks in Washington, saying it wanted meetings to start on Dec. 9 and move after only two sessions to a site nearer

the Middle East. However, Mr. Ben Aharon's strongest objection was to U.S. proposals on resolving the decades-old conflict that were included in the invitations to all the parties.

"The most angering was before the negotiations even started the United States presented us with suggestions, and ideas about the contents... what we will reach at the end," he said.

Washington suggested to Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians that they present their models for an autonomous Palestinian region in the occupied West Bank — the goal of their direct negotiations.

It suggested the sides avoid deeply contentious issues such as sovereignty and control of land and water until later. Washington suggested discussions should focus on a possible land-for-peace deal on the occupied Golan Heights.

For Israeli-Lebanese talks, Washington suggested a possible Israeli withdrawal from the town

of Jezzine, north of its self-declared "security zone" that Lebanon would also like back.

"What decided it for us was the content by which the U.S. wanted us to hold the negotiations..." said Mr. Ben Aharon, who has had stormy relations with U.S. officials.

Israel also wanted a timetable giving five-day gaps between each meeting to emphasise that the Jewish state is holding separate talks with each Arab group.

"I don't want to guess the future but I want it to be understood the United States should understand there is a limit to what Israel is willing to do to enter a process that is unacceptable to us," Mr. Ben Aharon said.

"I think if they understand there is a certain format Israel can accept... the continuation will be healthier and more acceptable. And I think sooner or later we will be back on the track to which this process was started."

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Jordan takes part in preparatory meeting for summit

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is taking part in a meeting by Islamic countries' foreign ministers due to open in Dakar, Senegal, Thursday to prepare for the Islamic Countries Summit meeting on Dec. 9.

Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, who left Amman for the Senegalese capital Monday, said that the meeting will prepare the agenda for the summit, which is expected to discuss a host of important issues of concern to the Islamic Nation. The most important of these issues, he said, is the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as current efforts to reach a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the region based on U.N. Security Council resolutions and international legitimacy.

The minister, who is leading a group of Jordanian officials, said that the summit was expected to discuss current world affairs, means of rebuilding solidarity in the Islamic World and challenges facing Islamic countries. Dr. Abu Jaber said that Jordan will take part in the summit meeting and will do all it can to rally the ranks of the Islamic nations.

The foreign minister also said that he was looking forward to the meetings with his counterparts in the Arab and Islamic nations to coordinate positions and to discuss current efforts to achieve a Middle East peace.

Accompanying Dr. Abu Jaber to the meeting in Dakar are Raef Nijem, former minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs, Ahmad Helayel, the ministry of awqaf's secretary general, Jordao's ambassador to Morocco, Jordao's consul general in Jeddah and two other foreign ministry officials.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday attends a symposium on sectarianism in Amman (Petra photo)

Role of ethnic, religious and national differences discussed

AMMAN (J.T.) — Participants in a two-day symposium on sectarianism which opened in Amman Monday discussed current conflicts in the latter part of the 20th century, noting that they all largely emanated from ethnic, religious and national differences.

The delegates agreed that mankind has to find proper solutions for this problem to allow for co-existence. It must also pave the ground for ethnic diversity to contribute most positively to the enrichment of local communities, they said.

The symposium, organized by the Goethe Institute in Amman together with the Amman-based Arab Thought Forum (ATF), is being attended by delegates from Jordan and Germany. They are discussing working papers dealing with the advent of the spirit of sectarianism and ethnic nationalism, the state and the nation in

the Arab Orient, ethnic co-existence and violence and prospects for the creation of a state and nation of multiracial communities.

The head of the German group to the symposium submitted a working paper entitled: "The Renewal of Nationalism in Eastern Europe" in which he outlined the role of minorities in the formation of a modern state. The researcher also reviewed the relationship between the nation and the community and differences between the two concepts, the emergence of ethnic nationalities in various parts of the world and their demand for independence.

He cited the current situations in Yugoslavia and Soviet republics as examples. "I believe that this demonstrates that the resurrection of nationalism and national conflicts in eastern Europe, the revival of a phenomenon which theoreticians had already pronounced dead and buried is an event of global significance. Rudolf Hiff said in his paper.

He said that the new nationalism in eastern Europe only appears to be a resurrection of the nationalism of western and central Europe of the 19th century, which imposed its structures on the entire world.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attended part of the second session Monday and voiced his strong belief that nations should give due attention to people's real interests, respect their will and choice and to give due attention to the humanitarian dimensions and related issues in the Middle East.

The Crown Prince also underlined the importance of benefiting from Europe's experiments on questions related to sectarianism and ethnic minority issues.

Officials condemn Israeli decision to extend Bir Zeit University closure

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Israel's decision to renew the closure order of Bir Zeit University for another three months is another attempt on the part of the occupation authorities to provoke negative reactions on the part of the Palestinian delegation to the peace process, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, official spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation, said Monday.

The Israeli measure is illegal and is a violation of international law and Palestinian human rights, she said. It is also a flagrant defiance of the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace conference, Dr. Ashrawi added.

By extending the order, Bir Zeit University will have been closed for over four years, according to the university's liaison office in Amman. It issued a statement in which it said that the university views the present extended closure as a very serious offense, especially since all other Palestinian universities were allowed to reopen several months ago.

The closure order clearly indicates the lack of respect for international resolutions concerning academic freedoms and is indicative of intent to erect obstacles to the peace process, the statement said.

Dr. Ghassan Al Khatib, a member of the Palestinian delegation's advisory committee, said the continued closure was aimed at undermining the confidence-building measures started at the Madrid parity.

The extension of the closure, coupled with Israel's open intention to increase its Jewish settlements is a clear indication of Israel's evil intentions, he said.

He added that Israel is clearly aiming at provoking the Palestinians and the whole international community, including the U.S. government.

A spokesman for the Amman-based regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) said that the Israeli measure deprives the Palestinians of their rights to an education.

Association of Arab Universities (AAU) Secretary General Mohammed Dughaim urged world organisations to take action to force Israel to refrain from such arbitrary actions.

Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh, speaker of the Palestine National Council, said that Israel's extended closure of Bir Zeit University aims at aborting the peace process. He said

Israel openly refuses to live in peace with the Palestinians people.

According to the liaison office statement, the university will continue to challenge the Israelis by providing educational services to its students in makeshift arrangements and through "undeclared classes" in student and faculty homes or rented premises outside the university campus.

It said that the university will do all it can to provide educational opportunities for the Palestinian people. The statement stressed that the university would continue its campaign to see to it that the university is re-opened and that its students, faculty, staff and administration resume their normal academic roles on their campus without coercion or harassment.

Ministry reviewing laws dealing with operations of village councils

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment has just embarked on a comprehensive revision of its laws and regulations concerning the local councils and their activities with a view to modernising them.

One of the main objectives of this revision is to grant expanded authority to heads of local councils and bigger roles for the councils to serve as socio-economic units and local governments, according to Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tabeishat.

The modernisation programme will be largely based on the experiences gained in municipal and village councils development and service sectors in a manner that would cater to modern needs, the minister explained in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The revision will cover the present local councils situation, their financial, administrative and technical services, recommendations passed by various conferences and seminars organised by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment over the past few years, the minister said.

He said that the revision will take into account proposals put forth by heads of local councils concerning new laws and regulations.



Abdul Razzak Tabeishat

tions and their amendments. The revision comes on the heels of a wide scale tour conducted by the minister of various regions of the Kingdom in order to discuss reform to councils' laws and future programmes.

Dr. Tabeishat said his ministry had asked the heads of the local councils to present views, proposals and ideas that could be incorporated in the new laws and regulations. He said that the ministry also plans to enlist charitable and voluntary organisations in the new endeavour, benefiting from their experiences in rural areas.

A mayor or head of a village council has to plan and execute programmes and public services, not just supervise their implementation, the minister said.

Company to showcase products

AMMAN (Petra) — The Philips Company is organising an international telecommunications conference in Amman today with the participation of delegates from six countries to orient the public on the most modern technical equipment currently produced by the company.

In the two-day meeting, which is expected to be opened by Minister of Communications Jamal Sarraf, the delegates will inspect and discuss equipment used in the telephone, microwave, television and communications fields produced by the company.

A Philips Company representative told a press conference that Amman was chosen for the conference because of the Kingdom's worldwide good image and reputation.

Ministers and directors of telecommunications in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan will attend the meeting and discuss working papers dealing with general telecommunications operations in urban and rural regions, telephone exchanges, car telephones, public and television telephones among other topics.

Chamber proposes ideas to stimulate national economy

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Chamber of Industry has put forth a set of ideas and proposals aimed at promoting the industrial sector and boosting the national economy.

The chamber's director general, Mohammad Halaqa, suggested that the government allow the private sector to import certain commodities in place of the Ministry of Supply like sugar, which is used in a number of industrial processes. By importing this commodity, he said, the treasury would benefit because the importers would be paying duty on imports and competition would bring down prices for the consumer.

Dr. Halaqa noted that Jordanian manufacturers pay the Ministry of Supply higher prices for imported sugar than the rates that exist on world markets. In addition, they are forced to pay these higher prices because they have no other alternatives.

Dr. Halaqa also suggested that

sufficient incentives be offered to exporters so that they would be encouraged to look for new markets for Jordanian products. He suggested that the government introduce further facilities and help exporters overcome current obstacles.

Dr. Halaqa said that the government should give more attention to small-sized industries, offering them credit facilities so that they will absorb more job seekers and reduce the problem of unemployment. He also suggested expanding industrial cities like the Sahab Industrial City and suggested that the government provide the required infrastructure so that major and middle-sized industrial schemes be initiated.

Dr. Halaqa noted that the current blockade imposed on the port of Aqaba has resulted in major losses for Jordanian industrialists. The blockade has created difficulties for the private sector in general and the industrial sector in particular. It has also led to a sharp increase in freight rates and, consequently, a rise in the prices of imported products for local consumers.

The Shipping Agents' Association (SAA) of Jordan told the Jordan Times last week that Jordanian importers of foodstuff as well as Iraq stand to suffer drastically from the enforcement of the international sanctions on Iraq.

Particularly affected by the American-led naval fleet patrolling the Red Sea are bulk cargo carriers loaded with rice, sugar and flour which are intercepted and subjected to unreasonable procedures and regulations, shipping officials have said.

Dr. Halaqa expressed satisfaction with the idea that the new government is oriented towards giving a bigger role to the private sector. A policy, he said, which is bound to stimulate the national economy and create a better climate for investment.

Contracts signed for preservation of lands

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Agriculture Monday granted three tenders to local firms worth a total of JD 423,000 for soil maintenance and conservation projects within the Zarqa River Basin.

The first contract, worth JD 180,000, is for a project to be carried out on 8,563 dunums within the Jerash and Kiteh districts benefiting the lands of 224 local farmers.

The second, worth JD 98,000, covers 11,694 dunums in the Sukhneh and Mudawwar districts benefiting the lands of 85 local farmers.

The third tender, worth JD 145,000, covers 12,282 dunums in the districts of Alouk and Remiemin benefiting lands owned by 252 farmers.

According to the contracts, signed by Minister of Agriculture Fayez Khasawneh and managers of the three local firms, the projects should be finished in 275 days.

The ministry said that more work within the Zarqa River Basin will be signed in the coming few months. The project entails developing land within the basin, including soil, maintenance and preservation schemes, covering 95,500 dunums.

The overall scheme, which runs to 1993, aims to develop safe land use, soil conservation and improved farming techniques.



Ziyad Fariz

Official to try to secure financial aid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz left for Washington Monday to hold talks with officials at the World Bank on securing financial resources for Jordan's balance of payments and to ensure financial assistance for the Kingdom's economic development.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, World Bank assistance is also sought to help support the Kingdom's current plans to implement the economic restructuring programme as agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker has stressed that the new government was totally committed to the implementation of this programme.

In his speech from the throne, which is to also serve as the government's policy statement, His Majesty King Hussein referred to the difficulties facing the Jordanian economy. But, he noted, the government will persist in dealing with the problems and will strive to reduce the trade deficit in the balance of payments through increasing and diversifying exports, encouraging tourism and reducing imports.

Last month, the government of outgoing Prime Minister Taher Masi announced the 1992 fiscal budget, which revealed a deficit of JD 107 million and said that the deficit will be covered by external and internal loans.

Dr. Fariz, a member of a Jordanian team led by Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, is negotiating financial assistance from the European Community (EC) to stimulate the national economy and overcome the present economic difficulties.

Accompanying Dr. Fariz on his visit to Washington is Dr. Michel Marto, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Parliamentary committees meet

AMMAN (Petra) — The Parliament's Upper and Lower Houses' committees entrusted with drafting the two Houses' replies to the speech from the throne met Monday separately to study the speech in detail. The Upper House committee met under the chairmanship of House Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, who told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the committee will hold another meeting Tuesday and is expected to finish the draft reply before Thursday. The Lower House's committee Monday elected deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh as its chairman and deputy Majid Khalifeh as its rapporteur. The committee is expected to meet again Tuesday.

Parliamentary delegation leaves for India

AMMAN (Petra) — A parliamentary delegation led by deputy Saad Haddadin will leave Amman for India today for a week-long official visit. The delegation comprises deputies Ahmad Kafawin, Daoud Kojak, Jamal Haddad and Mansour Murad in addition to Fayez Shawabkeh of the Parliament's general secretariat.

Higher custom revenues reported

AMMAN (Petra) — The revenues of the Customs Department last month amounted to JD 37,240,000, registering an increase of JD 16,288,000 over November 1990, according to an official source at the department. The source said the revenues of the department since the beginning of 1991 till Nov. 30 reached JD 301,857,000, compared to JD 260,220,000 during the same period in 1990.

Agriculture seminar begins

AMMAN (Petra) — A four-day seminar entitled "Agricultural Policy" will begin today at the

Royal Cultural Centre. The seminar, which is organised by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), will discuss several working papers dealing with agricultural resources, institutional development in the agricultural sector, marketing and pricing policies and agricultural development strategies. Specialists and experts in agricultural and economic fields representing Jordan and FAO will participate in the seminar.

Labour unions to increase cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — A Libyan labour unions delegation left Amman Monday after a week-long visit during which delegation members were received by the secretary general of the Federation of the Jordanian Labour Unions and several union leaders. The delegation signed with the Jordanian federation an agreement which provides for promoting and bolstering cooperation between Jordan and Libya in labour-related fields. During its stay in Amman, the delegation visited several labour unions and factories to be familiarised with the achievements of the federation and the Jordanian industrial sector.

ILO official visiting Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — An International Labour Organisation (ILO) official is due to arrive in Amman today on a week-long visit to the Kingdom. Nicolae Sarraf, advisor to the director general of the ILO on labour affairs, will meet during his stay in Amman with Jordanian labour union leaders for talks on enhancing cooperation between the ILO and the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions. Mr. Sarraf will also discuss issues related to a training and educational programme which the ILO intends to launch in Jordan within the framework of the assistance it extends to the Jordanian federation. The programme aims to expand the knowledge of Jordanian labourers, create new job opportunities and curb unemployment in Jordan.

VACANCY SECRETARY

The U.S. Agency for International Development has a vacancy for a secretary. The applicant should have completed secondary school and specialised training in typing and stenography; should have a minimum of one year of secretarial and clerical experience; should be able to type in English a minimum of 40 words per minute. Applicant should be able to operate a word processor or other computer programmes. Salary will range from JD 3,753.820 per annum, however, the salary will be based on the qualifications and prior work experience of the successful candidate.

Interested candidates who believe they have the required qualifications to fill this position may apply in writing by submitting a recent bio data and salary history in English to the following address: Personnel Office, U.S. Agency for International Development, P.O.Box 354, Amman, Jordan. Deadline for submitting applications is December 11, 1991. Top candidates will be called for personal interview.

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Ordinary Issue No. 22

Drawing of Dec. 2, 1991

Winning Tickets

Holder of ticket No. 07835 Wins JD 30,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 1,200 each wins JD 120 07836 07845 07935 08835 17835 07834 07825 07735 06835 07835
Holder of ticket No. 52734 Wins JD 7,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 700 each wins JD 70 52735 52744 52834 53734 62734 52733 52724 52634 51734 42734
Holder of ticket No. 77529 Wins JD 3,500	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 400 each wins JD 40 77520 77539 77629 78529 07529 77528 77519 77429 76529 67529
Holder of ticket No. 07520 Wins JD 2,500	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 250 each wins JD 25 07521 07530 07620 08520 17520 07529 07510 07420 06520 97520
Holder of ticket No. 11030 Wins JD 1,500	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 150 each wins JD 15 11031 11040 11130 12030 21030 11039 11020 11930 10030 01030
Holder of ticket No. 45413 Wins JD 1,200	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 100 each wins JD 10 45414 45423 45513 46413 55413 45412 45403 45313 44413 35413
Holder of ticket No. 19743 Wins JD 1,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 90 each wins JD 9 19744 19753 19843 10743 29743 19742 19733 19643 18743 09743
Holder of ticket No. 79606 Wins JD 800	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 70 each wins JD 7 79607 79616 79706 70606 89606 79605 79696 79506 78606 69606

Ticket numbers	21018 06016 45615 84295	win JD 200 each
Ticket numbers	41922 45861 90196	win JD 100 each

TICKETS ENDING WITH

4239 3341 6519 Win JD 50 each	5273 5913 4088 Win JD 20 each
6453 3354 8383 Win JD 10 each	9081 5042 Win JD 5 each
8109 8374 Win JD 3 each	609 773 021 996 Win JD 2 each

COVER PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY SELLERS

Fifty covers, attached to the stub of 10 ending in **748 677 728 138 986** Win JD 10

Winners of the grand prizes in the ordinary issue number 21 of Nov. 17, 1991

Imad Elbatal Karak - Photographer Half first JD 12,500	Tamim Sarraf Karak - Driver Half first JD 12,500	Mu'ni Mahab Amman - Goldsmith Half first JD 3,500	Mahmoud Ahmed Irbid - Farmer Half first JD 1,250	Roslan Shober Amman - Student Half first JD 1,250	Tamim Ibrahim Salt - Driver Half first JD 1,250	Ibrahim Abu Rahmah Amman - Lawyer Full first JD 1,250
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Next Draw takes place on December 17, 1991
First eight biggest prizes are issued from GUVS headquarters

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An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
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Positive politics

THE SURPRISE withdrawal of Deputy Abdul Majeed Shreideh from the race for the post of speaker of the Lower House of Parliament in favour of Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Abdul Latif Arabiyat offers a unique opportunity for a harmonious and constructive relationship among the various political blocs in Parliament. Mr. Shreideh was the candidate of the Constitution and National blocs that group 33 deputies. That could have assured Mr. Shreideh victory in the elections for the speakership had he went ahead with his nomination. Mr. Shreideh has very clearly signalled to the Muslim Brotherhood that they were required to play their part in these critical times when he said in his speech that "the Islamists have not been included in the Cabinet so let them be (influential) in Parliament." In effect the parliamentary blocs have all shown a degree of maturity in dividing the national task among themselves at this critical stage in our history. In this sense, democracy in Jordan has registered a real victory. With the government and the parliamentary blocs represented in it extending their hand to the opposition, the stage has now been set for a positive development in the quest for further promotion and consolidation of democracy in the Kingdom.

Obviously the pressing issues of the day are behind this conciliatory move within the Lower House of Parliament. Deputy Shreideh said so in so many words when he referred to the urgent national issues confronting the country as calling for cooperation among all factions in Parliament.

Indeed peace in the Middle East is not all that concerns Jordan and Jordanians. The country is still under the grip of harsh economic conditions that resulted in increased unemployment and poverty. There is always a sense of urgency when such formidable challenges are approached and dealt with. Then there are regional issues which stand to affect the entire Middle East, including of course Jordan. Water and the environment, concerns for the entire region, require a united rather than a divided effort if we want to resolve them in a positive manner and in a way which could ensure benefits to our country. All Jordanians have a stake in which is going around them, either regionally or internationally, and no one can afford useless bickering between the Parliament and government or irrational division among the principal political groups in the Lower House. With Speaker Arabiyat extending renewed felicitations to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, we hope that his bloc in the House would not vote negatively against the new government. Democracy, like anything else, is not about negative politics but has a lot to do with positive contribution.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Monday described His Majesty King Hussein's speech from the Throne delivered to Parliament Sunday as comprehensive, expressing the full and deep confidence in the country's ability to pursue the objectives of democracy and construction. The speech voiced the aspirations of the Jordanian people and presented a comprehensive analysis of the Kingdom's foreign and domestic policies, said the paper. But at the same time, the King's speech to Parliament and the nation contained a clear warning against any attempt by any group to impede the democratic process or deviate it from its course or cause a crisis in the existing relations between the executive and legislative authorities, the paper said. The speech also warned against the imposition by a certain group of its ideology on the rest of the Jordanian people undermining citizens' basic rights and stemming initiatives by any individual to offer service to the country and the nation, the paper added. Needless to say that the speech, which is serving as the government's policy statement will be respected and upheld by the executive authority; and it is hoped that Parliament will give the government a hand in implementing the Royal directives so that the democratic system can be safeguarded. Time and again, said the paper, King Hussein reiterated and reaffirmed that Jordan will not go back from its democratic course and the speech from the Throne came to further stress such principle and to show the way for the government and Parliament alike.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily said that Jordan is burdened with nearly \$9.2 billion in debts, accumulated between 1975 and 1987, and that this debt exceeds by four times the Kingdom's ability to pay its dues. Faded Al Faneek said that it is in Jordan's interest to obtain long-term soft loans at present to help it overcome pressing economic problems and help retain the minimum standard of living of its people. Such long-term loans with very low interest payable over 20 years are bearable and no doubt part of such debt will be waived by the creditors, the writer said. He expressed hope that the creditor governments will in due time cancel their debts to Jordan, but until that time comes, the country is in need of these long-term soft loans to tide it over the present difficulties and help Jordanians retain their present minimum standard of living. The writer said that the debts accumulated in the past decade have caused a drop in the value of the currency by 50 per cent and the Jordanians standard of living by 40 per cent.

The View from Fourth Circle

Power, change, and dances of the jungle beasts

By Rami G. Khouri

YOU know that this is a moment of great historical change in the Middle East because everyone is acting in such a peculiar manner. Change is evident in domestic developments in several Middle Eastern countries, as well as in political capitals further afield, including:

- the manner in which Parliament forced a change of government in Jordan, without forcing a change in policy.
- the tit-for-tat feuding between Israel and the United States.
- the sudden reinvigoration of extremist and provocative acts by the Israeli government.

The historical change I refer to really boils down to a very simple process: power is being transferred from the old ways of military- and security-minded people to the new ways of civil government and political leaderships that seek the equal application of human and political rights to all people in the area. A region that sought unsuccessfully to assure its stability and security through the psyche of fear and the politics of force is now lurching towards a new set of political criteria. In the lurching, otherwise rational men act in strange ways.

The dispute between the U.S. and Israel about starting the bilateral peace talks in Washington on Dec. 4 or Dec. 9 is a case in point. The date is irrelevant. The real issue here is power. Who decides the date and venue? Clearly, the United States does in this case. What does this portend for the future? It suggests that Washington may also lay down the law on more substantive matters, such as Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land, Palestinian rights, or American aid to Israel. The power balance is shifting. Scared warriors cannot forever dictate policy. So they challenge, they ask for five more days in December. They try to believe that the world has not changed, that their old ways still work.

They also seek to make change in the region difficult. The Israelis keep building settlements in Palestine and the Golan Heights. Their parliament affirms that the Golan can never be returned to Syria. Their prime minister dives into the Old Testament, desperately seeking shelter from the contemporary ways of cold reality. They take over more homes in Arab Jerusalem and raid the archives of the most sacred Islamic holy places in Palestine. These are the desperate acts of old men who fear change, who see power slipping out of their hands and into the hands of a new generation of Arabs and Israelis that sees security as the consequence of justice and equal rights for all, rather than of military might and physical occupation of other people's lands. These old men from the past try to ignore the signals of change from the new generations, the opinion polls in Israel and among American Jews that show a massive majority in favour of freezing settlements, exchanging land for peace, and coexisting on equal terms with the Palestinians and other Arabs. As power shifts from the old, scarred warriors to the young who speak of justice, political actions become rough, emotions shrill.

Take domestic politics in Jordan as another very different example that belies the similar phenomenon of societies in change and power in transition. Why would the ancient regime-type characters who dominate the Constitution Bloc challenge the young government of Taher Masri? I have heard many explanations, of which three seem possible: a) some people resented his Palestinian origin, b) some people resented not being included in his cabinet, c) some people resented the postponement of parliament for two months at the crucial moment when Mideast peace talks were starting, and they showed their resentment by challenging the prime minister and his cabinet.

Option (a) is probably applicable to a small number of small-minded people whom we can easily ignore, because they represent the past, and have no serious role in the future of this land and this region. Narrow ethnicity and false nationalism have been the plague of the Arabs in the last two decades, and should be left behind in the ashes of the 1970s and 1980s. The overwhelming message from the grassroots of the Arab World

today is not "where do you come from?", but rather, "where are we heading to?"

Options (b) and (c) are more likely. But what do they reveal about how political and economic power are wielded in Jordan today? They show that the process of democratisation is rather serious, even though is not yet impeccably decorous, deep, or widespread throughout society. Members of parliament suddenly realised that their positions entailed more than their candy-coloured licence plates and new passports. They realised that they had an opportunity to participate in the apportioning and exercise of raw power — and raw power, in the end, means influence, jobs, contracts, financial benefits, the glow of the television lights, trips to foreign cities, meetings with important visitors from abroad, and the satisfaction of feeling self-important because your people chose to have you represent them in parliament. To become a cabinet minister assures you of lifetime financial security, and a substantial hike in your political and social standing in a society that is intensely political and socialised.

It took about two years, but our MPs finally started to play the political game when they had a prime minister such as Taher Masri willing to play. Taher Masri should go down in the modern history of Jordan as the first prime minister who truly engaged in a political process, who responded to popular sentiment as represented in parliament, who put up with the silliness of some MPs who were flexing their young political muscles. This game was not possible in 1989-91 with Sherif Zeid Ben Shaker or Mudar Badran, mainly because of the complex interplay between the lure of power for MPs and the constraints imposed on them by social niceties and Arab traditions of courtesy.

Taher Masri changed all that, for he was correctly seen to be our first genuinely democratic prime minister (or, as the very perceptive and honest Jordanian modern historian Mustafa Hamarneh called him, our first "instinctively democratic" prime minister). Unlike Mr. Badran and Sherif Zeid, Mr. Masri was fair game. His territorial social base was sufficiently diffused to allow him to be challenged without permanently damaging family honour or bilateral social/economic interests. His status as a wealthy, self-made businessman and public servant from a traditional regional merchant family also increased his eligibility to be challenged. He was a product of the marketplace, and thus subject to the forces of the marketplace.

His status as an elected member of parliament was also a factor. He was a political animal living by the code of the jungle. The other jungle beasts found it not only permissible but perhaps even biologically obligatory to challenge his supremacy. Why should he be prime minister, and not someone else from parliament, if parliament was suddenly the pool from which the wielders of power were plucked?

His strength was that he accepted the challenge, played by the democratic rules, and gracefully bowed out when he saw that his incumbency was the inevitable price to be paid for the continuing Jordanian transition to pluralistic and participatory democracy. The amazing thing is that the new government has adopted exactly the same policies of the Masri government — but it has a stronger base in parliament. So, the Masri policies were not the issue. The issue was power, but power is not totally without constraints, as we shall see with our new government.

Sherif Zeid poses a more problematic challenge to parliament, for he is not as easy to oppose, for four reasons:

- 1) He is a Sherif, a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad's noble family, and therefore slightly above the jungle of parliamentary politics.
- 2) He offered His Majesty King Hussein's speech as his government's political programme. While everyone will have comments about the speech, and many people will suggest amendments, additions or changes in emphasis, very few people will want to oppose it outright, because

this would be seen as a personal gesture against the King — and that remains beyond the accepted rules of this constitutional monarchy. History will ultimately pass verdict on the policies of King Hussein, and our parliamentarians will be more than happy to leave that job to history.

- 3) Sherif Zeid offers the jungle of breather, a pause between bush battles during which the beasts retreat, regroup, tally their losses and gains, and review the landscape once again. It would not look good to bring down another government at a moment when the country presents itself as a budding democracy and a committed partner in the search for regional peace and stability.
- 4) His cabinet includes members from all major parliamentary blocs except the Muslim Brotherhood, so that the MPs' thirst for executive-style political power is largely satisfied.

The real issue here, though, is not personalities, but power. Parliamentarians have woken up to the fact that they can increase their personal power and their impact on decision-making. They are testing how far they can go, flexing their young muscles, standing in front of the political mirror and admiring their newfound bulk. And, like adolescents who have been given a new car, they are pushing it to the limit, testing how fast they can go without crashing, driving dangerously on the edge.

All of this seems rather healthy to me. Remember, however, that MPs now perform on a stage that is largely unmonitored. The press is letting them off easy, because the press is mostly envious, and wants to share the stage of power and profit with them. The electorate is intrigued, amused, busy elsewhere, or uninterested in the deeds of grown men acting like teenagers. Special interest groups, lobbies, and extra-parliamentary political forces are young or non-existent, and will take time to develop.

Our MPs were wonderful at challenging the old style of government and calling for new methods and policies. Now that they are in power, most of them have proved mediocre at presenting policies that can meet the challenges of the times. Most of them still think they live in pre-November 1989. They want to be perpetual opposition figures, while enjoying the perks of incumbency. They demand from the government many things, forgetting that they are part of the government. They admire themselves in the political mirror, not knowing that the mirror will soon shatter from the sheer intensity of their audacity.

We have to put up with this until the MPs themselves discover that they, too, are accountable to the people, just as the prime minister and the government are accountable to them. I await the next general elections with great relish, because MPs who now engage in jungle ceremonies and wild tribal dances will have to answer to the people who gave them power in the first place — the voters. Some MPs will be thrown out, unceremoniously dumped after being exposed as false and selfish leaders. Others will be re-elected, triumphant in their personal credibility and their political commitment to a genuinely pluralistic democratic process. Taher Masri and the many others of his breed will enjoy their moment in history, secure in their selfishness, self-confident in their commitment to an Arab identity based on dignity and democracy rather than on dinars and dollars.

This is the way of nations in transition, and we should welcome it as a healthy and vital phenomenon. As political and economic power become more diffused, expanding from a limited circle of interests to a broader electoral base, strange things will happen, grown men will act in peculiar ways, speeding cars will rattle the ground beneath us, and children will wake up to the sound of mirrors crashing. Yet, the people will be the victors in the end, for not only will they ultimately get more democratic and responsive government, but they also get to watch an entertaining show on the way.

North Korea risks becoming second Iraq in nuclear row

By Seigo Sakamoto
Reuters

TOKYO — Isolated North Korea could become an international pariah and suffer similar sanctions to Iraq if it goes on resisting world pressure to open its secret nuclear facilities to outside scrutiny, Korea analysts said on Friday.

They said failure to comply, in defiance of the United States and other concerned nations, could mean Pyongyang, like Baghdad this year, would be faced with a U.N.-mandated mission demanding access to make sure it is not secretly developing nuclear weapons.

North Korea, a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has long been under pressure to sign the follow-up nuclear safeguards agreement, which would allow international inspection of its nuclear facilities.

North Korea strongly denies it is developing nuclear arms, but has refused to accept unconditional inspection of its plant at Yongbyon, 90 kilometres north of Pyongyang. This led to fears in Washington, Seoul and Tokyo that it is close to acquiring the ability to make nuclear arms.

Visiting Seoul this month, U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney added to the sense of crisis.

Warning that a nuclear-armed North Korea would be "the most serious threat to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in East Asia," he announced that Washington was indefinitely postponing planned troop pullouts from the south.

The United States, which fought alongside the south in the 1950-53 Korean war, has kept forces there ever since under a defence pact.

Within days of Mr. Cheney's tough talking, Pyongyang took what appeared to be a conciliatory step.

A government statement on Monday said for the first time: "We will sign the nuclear safeguards accord when the United States begins to withdraw its nuclear weapons from South Korea."

Otherwise, it repeated its previous conditions for accepting outside scrutiny — simultaneous

inspection in both Koreas, U.S.-North Korean talks on inspection, and north-south talks on de-nuclearising the Korean peninsula.

By coincidence South Korean Defence Minister Lee Jong-Koo, speaking the same day, also hinted at compromise.

He told parliament that Seoul, long hostile to any linkage between North Korean nuclear moves and weapons stored on its soil, was now considering accepting simultaneous inspection if the North would abandon making nuclear arms.

Teruo Komaki, of Tokyo's Institute of Developing Economies, said the Pyongyang statement "represents somewhat of a softening in North Korea's stance in that it gave the timing of signing in a concrete term — 'when the United States begins to

withdraw."

Masao Okonogi of Keio University said: "North Koreans are now aware that the deadline for them (to sign the accord) is just around the corner."

Mr. Okonogi and Mr. Komaki agreed that Pyongyang would probably sign the accord and go as far as accepting inspection, after various twists and turns, although there still remained difficult technical problems in implementing simultaneous inspection.

Another Korea watcher, who asked not to be named, was less impressed.

"The north may sign the accord," he said, "but it is unlikely to accept inspection because it intends to go nuclear to get the military upper hand over the south. It is playing for time to that end."

Hideshi Takesada of Japan's Institute of National Defence Studies sounded a similar note of caution. "Even if it does sign the accord, North Korea may duck allowing inspection on one pretext or another while pressing on to become a nuclear power."

Whatever Pyongyang's hidden agenda, analysts generally agree that it has little time left to act.

"Unless it makes clear its intention to sign the safeguards accord by next spring, it could become a second Iraq," Mr. Komaki said. "Washington is losing patience."

Mr. Okonogi agreed. "North Korea, like Iraq before it, could face a compulsory U.S.-despatched inspection to stop it making nuclear weapons."

With Washington expected to pull its tactical nuclear weapons out of South Korea by the end of this year, Pyongyang's time for manoeuvre was slipping away, Mr. Okonogi said.

"If the north keeps refusing to sign the accord," he said, "an International Atomic Energy Agency meeting of governors in February is expected to act to condemn Pyongyang."

"Should this not work, the U.N. Security Council is likely to adopt a resolution calling for economic sanctions... Things are now working according to such a schedule that North Koreans are beginning to feel a sense of crisis," he said.

"They seem to have concluded they must take some steps before facing unwelcome action," Mr. Okonogi said. "Even economic sanctions would deal a serious blow to that impoverished state."

In September, President George Bush announced he was ending deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons worldwide, including those deployed in South Korea.

South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo followed up with an unexpected declaration early in November renouncing manufacture, storage or use of nuclear weapons by the south.

Analysts saw these moves as designed to give North Korea a face-saving pretext to abandon its nuclear arms programme.

Despite its vow, Israel locked in peace moves with PLO

By Howard Goller
Reuters

JERUSALEM — Israel is locked in Middle East peace moves with the PLO, despite its vow never to talk to the Palestinian organisation it regards as its biggest foe.

When talks resume as expected in Washington next week, negotiators for Israel's most hardline government in history will again sit across a table from negotiators who tell the world they represent the PLO.

It's a hard pill to swallow for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. He officially brands the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), a terrorist group bent on destroying the Jewish state.

He has had little choice, facing pressure from both a U.S. administration and an Israeli public keen to advance the talks launched in Madrid last month aimed at ending 43 years of Arab-Israeli conflict.

Washington, Israel's guardian ally and main supplier of economic and military aid, has been eager for a solution since forging an alliance with Arab states in the Gulf war.

Palestinians insist it is no secret their guiding hand is the Tunis-based organisation of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"Everyone knows it," Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the team representing Palestinians in the peace talks, told Israel's biggest newspaper Yediot Ahronoth last week.

"It is impossible to make any binding decisions regarding the peace process without decisions of the PLO leadership."

Israeli officials, while not acknowledging it, appear to recognise the PLO is involved.

Police recommended putting Ashrawi on trial for an interview with Jordan Television they said proved she had broken Israel's anti-terrorism law barring contacts with the PLO.

Then on Monday Israeli Attorney General Yosef Harish ruled "the public interest" would be better served by not prosecuting Dr. Ashrawi. He cited peace negotiations as a reason.

Israel bars both, Dr. Ashrawi and leading Palestinian nationalist Faisal Al Hussein from joining the negotiations because of their support for the PLO.

Yet Haidar Abdul Shafi, a doctor from the Gaza Strip who serves as chief Palestinian negotiator at the table, was himself a co-founder of the PLO in 1964.

Israeli officials take comfort in U.S. promises to deny the PLO a formal role in peace talks and to bar U.S. entry to PLO envoys when talks resume next Wednesday.

U.S. peace efforts collapsed only last year over Israel's view that the PLO, citing the organisation's failure to condemn an attack by one of its factions on an Israeli beach.

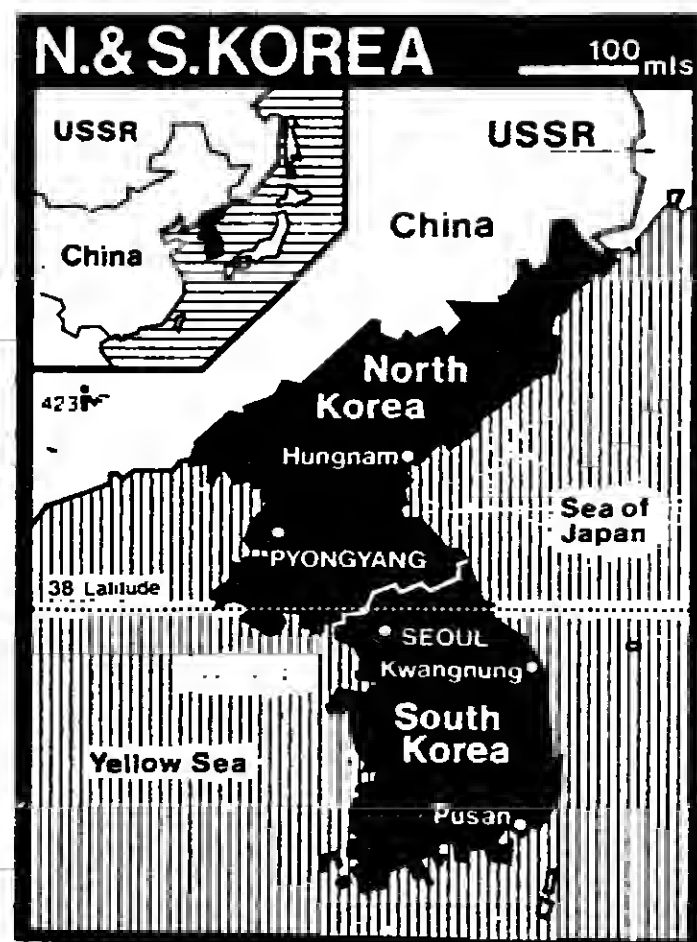
Israelis also believe that Palestinians from the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank are fast finding their own voice independent of the leadership in Tunis.

For more than two years the surveys of pollster Rafi Smith have shown at least half of Israelis would negotiate with the PLO if it were seen to recognise Israel and renounce terrorism.

But Mr. Smith says Israelis would overwhelmingly prefer to negotiate with Palestinians from Israeli-occupied lands — even if they support the PLO — rather than PLO leaders that include Mr. Arafat.

There are growing signs of acceptance among Israeli politicians.

The main opposition Labour Party, in a policy shift, last week adopted a platform dropping its opposition to talks with the PLO.



Joint delegation heads for Washington

(Continued from page 1)

very costly... very expensive." She said at least 12 Palestinians were killed by Israeli after the Madrid conference and several Palestinian homes were demolished.

Dr. Ashrawi who, in an opening statement, described the problem over U.S. visas as "technical issues," said later the wrangle was "a form of political pressure."

"There is a contradiction in the U.S. role as co-sponsor of the peace talks as its role as a host," she said. "This is a form of political pressure... that is why we have been calling for equal treatment and why we have been asking for a neutral European state as venue for the negotiations."

Dr. Ashrawi, a professor of English language at Bir Zeit University in the occupied West Bank, refused to reveal the names of the advisors involved in the row. "We have never discussed the names in public and I am not going to do it now," Dr. Ashrawi said, confirming that there was no problem involving the actual Palestinian negotiators and a "guidance committee" — of which she herself is a member — and "advisors" who are residents of the occupied territories.

Despite her reference to American "pressure," Dr. Ashrawi affirmed that the delegation never received "a blanket assurance" that the entire Palestinian team would receive American visas.

Sources said the Palestinians had submitted a list of names to the U.S. consulate in occupied Jerusalem and were told that the visas would be issued in Amman. But the U.S. embassy in Amman informed the team late Sunday that it needed new applications, they said.

The U.S., which suspended an 18-month dialogue with the PLO in July 1990 after an aborted raid on Israel by one of the factions of the Tunis-based organisation, refuses visas for PLO members except on humanitarian grounds. The State Department reaffirmed this policy last week and said no PLO members would be given visas to accompany the Palestinian delegation as advisors.

"The Palestinians decided that it was not worth the effort to pursue the dispute with Washington," said an informed source, pointing out that it would have been a setback for the Palestinian approach if they were seen as adopting a hardline stand as Israel, which was maintaining its position Monday night that it was ready to go to Washington on Dec. 9 instead of Dec. 4 and that the talks should move to the Middle East after one or two meetings.

The row over visas was also seen as a climbdown by the PLO, which, in the face of being denied a direct role in the peace talks, is directing the delegation from behind the scenes.

"The crucial question was over the wisdom of the PLO leadership pressing hard in its effort to make a point and reaffirm its role," said the source. "Obviously such a stand would have undermined the entire process and they decided against it."

"They felt the issue was not substantive enough when compared with the host of topics — including their call for a freeze in Israeli settlements — they plan to discuss in Washington," added the source, who preferred anonymity.

At her press conference, Dr. Ashrawi, who refrained from any

direct reference to any details of the wrangle, said the Palestinians were going ahead on the basis that the joint delegation will split and hold separate negotiations with the Israelis. "This is the logic and... it is stated in the letter of invitation" to Washington, she said.

She also left the door open for technical options in the event of a powerless, low-level Israeli delegation turns up in Washington to avert the scenario of empty Israeli chairs at the negotiating table. "You will see what we will do" in such a situation, she said. "We don't want to speculate or discuss strategies."

Dr. Ashrawi, who described Jordanian-Palestinian coordination as excellent, said there was "a certain level of (overall) Arab coordination, but it is not perfect. There is room for improvement."

The Syrian and Lebanese delegations to the separate sets of bilaterals also headed for Washington Monday.

The Jordanian side to the joint delegation is headed by Dr. Majali and included General Abdul Hafez Marei, Fayez Tarawneh, Mootber Haddadin, Ahmad Qatanani, Waleed Khalidi, Talal Al Hassan, Marwan Musaber, Musa Breizat, Awn Khasawneh, Anwar Khatib, Mohammad Bani Hani and Nayef Al Qadi.

The Palestinian team is led by Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi and includes Zakaria Al Agha, Elias

Freij, Samib Kanan, Saeb Erekat, Mamdouh Aker, Sami Kilani, Samir Abdullah, Freij Abu Medyan, Nabil Jaabari, Abdul Rahman Hamad, Mustafa Natche and Ghassan Al Khatib. The "guidance committee" of the Palestinians comprises Sari Nusseibeh and Zuhaira Kamal from the occupied territories in addition to Dr. Ashrawi, and Rashid Al Khalidi, Anis Qasem and Kamil Mansour, from the diaspora.

In a departure statement to Jordan Television, Dr. Majali said: "We are going to Washington in response to the U.S. invitation extended to us to attend the second round of bilateral talks."

The first round of bilaterals were held in Madrid after the conference was adjourned.

Dr. Majali expressed hope that Israel would agree to attend the Washington talks and pointed out that if the Israelis did not turn up then the peace process would come to a halt. "In such a case," he added, "the world will know who caused the disruption in the peace process and who is placing obstacles in its way."

Dr. Abdul Shafi told Jordan Television: "We are going to Washington with seriousness. The absence of the Israeli delegation at the talks will not prevent us from demanding our natural right to self-determination and the right to establish our Palestinian state."

WASHINGTON — U.S. Democratic presidential candidates, aching to battle President George Bush in 1992, are finding themselves hampered by shoestring budgets and scant media attention.

With the first primary election just 10 weeks away, economic hard times and uncertainty over a possible challenge by New York Governor Mario Cuomo are making it tough for the candidates to coax contributions out of potential donors.

Political activists already pinched by the recession are waiting to see whether Mr. Cuomo, best placed to beat Republican Bush, will enter the race before deciding where to put their money and support.

And while Mr. Bush is given extensive daily media coverage, the Democrats get only the occasional feature or televised debate that focuses on them as a group rather than as individuals.

"None of us are going to be blessed with a great deal of resources and, not surprisingly, the news media itself is a little short of cash. So it's a problem," candidate Bob Kerrey, a Nebraska

Democratic presidential candidates slowed by shoestring budget

By Irwin Arieff
Reuters

senator, told Reuters. To date, only one Democrat — former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas — has used television ads in the campaign.

The field of Democrats seeking to challenge Mr. Bush next year includes Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, governors Bill Clinton of Arkansas and Douglas Wilder of Virginia, and former California Governor Jerry Brown as well as Mr. Kerrey and Mr. Tsongas.

All the major Democratic candidates report campaign contributions at levels well below their goals though all but Mr. Brown have been declared eligible by the government for federal subsidies for their primary elec-

tion campaign. In the primaries, voters in individual states say who they would like to see as candidates for their parties.

The federal matching subsidies are given out only as similar amounts are raised by each campaign, so individual candidates must still raise many millions of dollars in the next few months to make a credible showing in the primaries.

The candidates' situation appears even more dire when compared to the last presidential election, when a larger field of Democrats was fighting for the nomination.

In the run-up to the 1988 election, most candidates had raised far larger sums by this point in the campaign.

But 1992 differs from 1988 in several key respects.

Then, Ronald Reagan was leaving office, creating a vacancy in the White House that attracted a large field of Republicans and Democrats.

This election, Mr. Bush's incumbency and record-high popularity following the U.S.-led victory in the Gulf war initially discouraged many Democrats as well as Republicans from entering the race for the presidency.

On the Democratic side, only one candidate — Mr. Tsongas — had entered the race by last spring. Most of the others now running did not make up their minds until the autumn, and Mr. Cuomo says he remains undecided.

On the Republican side, before

mid-November no prominent Republican had expressed interest in challenging Mr. Bush for his party's nomination though in recent weeks there have been two.

Another difference this year is that the Democratic candidates are, as a group, less well known than some of the 1988 contenders, who included civil rights activist Jesse Jackson and House of Representatives Democratic leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri.

But the pace is likely to pick up next month, with the first televised debate among the Democratic presidential contenders set for Dec. 15, and again in January when the media begin to focus on the first 1992 presidential preference votes in Iowa on Feb. 10 and New Hampshire on Feb. 18.

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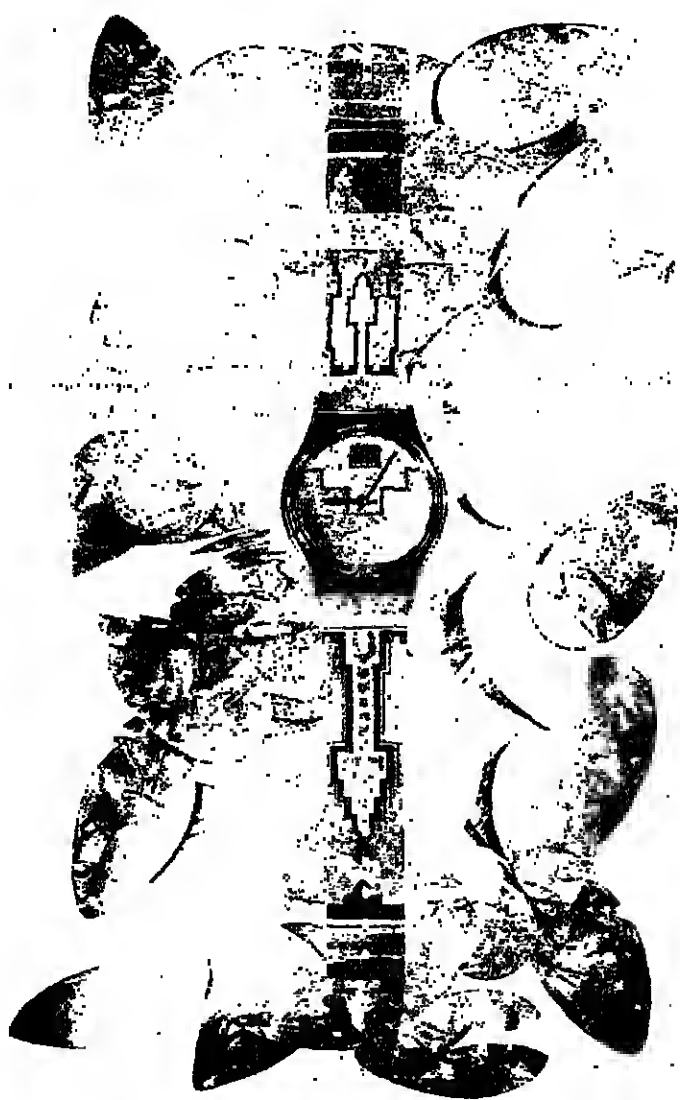
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Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	Tel Aviv Close
Sterling Pound	1.7677	1.7763
Deutsche Mark	1.6235	1.6113
Swiss Franc	1.4340	1.4258
French Franc	5.5515	5.5075
Japanese Yen	129.95	129.99
European Currency Unit	1.2555	1.2633

USD Per STG
European Opening: 11:00 a.m. 12:11

European Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	4.81	4.84	4.87	4.87
Sterling Pound	10.43	10.43	10.37	10.37
Deutsche Mark	9.45	9.45	9.45	9.45
Swiss Franc	7.93	7.93	7.87	7.87
French Franc	9.68	9.68	9.62	9.50
Japanese Yen	6.28	6.09	5.81	5.62
European Currency Unit	10.31	10.18	10.18	10.06

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Precious Metals	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Silver	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	367.65	6.90	Silver	4.085	.089

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6600	0.6670
Sterling Pound	1.2074	1.2134
Deutsche Mark	0.4217	0.4236
Swiss Franc	0.4767	0.4791
French Franc	0.1234	0.1240
Japanese Yen	0.5230	0.5256
Deutsche Mark	0.3742	0.3761
Swedish Krona	0.1152	0.1158
Italian Lira	0.0560	0.0563
Belgian Franc	0.02025	0.02035

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7740	1.7830
Lebanese Lira	0.0771	0.0777
Saudi Riyal	0.1810	0.1816
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	0.1842	0.1850
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2170
Omani Riyal	1.7400	1.7490
UAE Dirham	0.1842	0.1850
Greek Drachma	0.3675	0.3775
Cypriot Pound	1.4790	1.4983

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	2/12/1991	Close	30/11/1991	Close
All-Share	125.20		125.09	
Banking Sector	104.82		104.67	
Insurance Sector	127.34		127.35	
Industry Sector	155.26		155.36	
Services Sector	139.95		138.91	

December 31, 1990 = 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.7780/90	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1325/30	Canadian dollar
	1.6068/78	Deutsche marks
	1.8180/90	Dutch guilders
	1.4223/30	Swiss francs
	33.12/16	Belgian francs
	5.4900/50	French francs
	1213/1214	Italian lire
	129.80/90	Japanese yen
	5.8860/8910	Swedish crowns
	6.3300/50	Norwegian crowns
	6.2520/70	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	367.00/368.40	U.S. dollars

Egypt fights to keep oil firms interested

CAIRO (R) — Egypt is fighting to keep foreign oil companies in the country in the face of more tempting prospects elsewhere.

Industry sources said that Royal Dutch/Shell Group was planning to sell its stake in one of Egypt's major oil-producing groups.

Last month, British Petroleum (B.P.) confirmed it was quitting the same consortium and Egypt.

"It's going to be much more difficult to attract foreign investment to Egypt," said one oil executive. "It's a growing trend that should be taken seriously."

Oil production is Egypt's largest source of foreign revenue. Earnings of more than \$2.5 billion in the year to June were a vital boost to the country's fragile economy.

Shell and B.P., both rumoured to be front-runners for a lucrative contract to help set Kuwait's shattered oil industry on its feet again, were each planning to sell 16.6 per cent shares in Suez Petroleum Company (SUOCO), the industry sources said.

SUOCO, which is 50 per cent owned by state firm Egyptian General Petroleum Company (EGPC) with the remaining sixth held by the German firm Deminor, produces about 100,000 barrels per day (b/d). Egypt's total output is 870,000 b/d.

In six months, new Oil Minister Hamdi Al Banhi has brought in new staff to fill senior positions and companies privately say they find the authorities easier to deal with than under his predecessor Abdul Hadi Kandeel.

But as personality clashes have faded, the root problems of operating in Egypt have emerged all the more clearly.

Although Egypt recently announced it had boosted reserves by nearly 50 per cent of six billion barrels — about 18 years worth of current production — fields are still small compared to many other oil-producing areas and economically marginal.

"I think they just covered their costs in Egypt and then thought there were better chances elsewhere," one Western economist based in Cairo said of B.P.'s decision to pull out.

The prospect of lower oil prices does not help.

Hopeful oil officials have billed the Western Desert as Egypt's great new prospect. But so far, a big find — in industry terms a field that would yield more than 50,000 b/d — has eluded companies lured to the area.

Domestic politics are another irritant to hard-boiled oil firms wanting to make money.

U.N. economists predict social unrest, anti-reform surge in former East Bloc

GENEVA (R) — United Nations economists Sunday forecast growing social unrest in 1992 in the Soviet Union and the former East Bloc with depression and unemployment fuelling pressure on governments to abandon economic reform.

But in its latest bi-annual report, the world body's Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) argues a new "Marshall plan" of coordinated Western assistance could put the region firmly on the road to recovery and political stability.

"The declines in output in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are now so large that it would be appropriate to speak of a depression," said the report, compiled by a team of European economists at ECE's Geneva headquarters.

The economists estimated the overall drop in industrial production for Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia at 19.5 per cent for 1991, and nine per cent and accelerating for the Soviet Union.

In the former East Germany, now part of a united German state, the fall this year was likely to be around 50 per cent but there

were signs recovery was about to begin, they said.

With all the ex-communist states forced to pursue tough measures in the switch to market economies, they said, it was increasingly uncertain how far their peoples would continue to accept the heavy costs without serious protest.

"It seems likely that social unrest will increase in 1992 and that in some countries there will be increasing pressure to dilute or abandon the reform process," the 125-page report — or Economic Bulletin for Europe — added.

"There is growing evidence that the limits of endurance may be dangerously close and that a further fall in living standards may be strongly resisted," it said.

Production and consumption levels seemed set to continue to fall and unemployment and inflation to rise and there was a mounting danger frustration over the continuing hardships would increase the attraction of "simple solutions."

The report said annual inflation in September was running at 20 per cent in Hungary and 60 per cent in Poland — both relatively advanced in reform — and at

around a massive 360 per cent in the Soviet Union.

The ECE warnings came against the background of a minor resurgence in some east European countries of backing for former communist parties and of a rapid growth in support for nationalist groups with strongly right-wing programmes.

In this situation, the report said, it was urgent for Western governments and international organisations to decide how far they could support the reform process and then organise assistance on a scale necessary to ensure success.

In 1947, as western Europe was struggling to rebuild in the wake of World War II and communism appeared on the march, U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall launched a European recovery programme (ERP) to revive the continent's stricken economies.

Denounced at the time by Moscow as an instrument of U.S. "economic imperialism," by 1952 when wound up it had pumped some \$13 billion into cash-strapped receiver countries and built the launch-pad for the boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

The ECE said a second ERP, creation of which it first proposed in 1990, would provide a framework for the West to coordinate assistance to the whole of eastern Europe and states emerging from the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Under the "Marshall plan," only the United States provided aid but today some 24 countries and at least seven world financial organisations are involved in guiding the former communist states out of the ruins of their state-run economies.

This dispersal has brought charges that much aid is wasted or duplicated and that limited financial and technical help is not fairly distributed. Some former East Bloc states argue the Soviet Union has preferential treatment.

The ECE said creation of a new ERP could be a vivid display of outside backing help preserve domestic support for reform "especially when the going gets tough."

But ECE economists promoting the idea say a new recovery programme should turn the cash-driven "Marshall plan" on its head by focussing primarily on

technical assistance in setting up the structures essential for a successful market economy.

These include an efficient banking network, financial and taxation systems, contract laws and legislation protecting property rights — all destroyed under communist rule but which still existed in the devastated Europe of the mid-1940s.

The economists argue that financial support on the relative scale of the 1948 ERP would lose much of its effectiveness unless these structures are either in place or at least beginning to function as they would in full market systems.

The ECE report was critical of Western countries which maintain trade barriers against exports from eastern Europe, especially clothing, food and textile products.

"It is clear that the successful transformation of the Eastern economies is a matter of vital importance for the foreign policy and security objectives of Western governments and as such it might be expected that these should have priority over sectional interests," it said.

Russian central bank moves to control money supply

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's central bank Monday took steps to rein in the republic's rapidly expanding money supply by refusing to provide enterprises with cash for traditional end-of-year bonuses, the Russian Information Agency (RIA) said.

"This concerns, in particular, the so-called 13th month salaries, and also lump-sum merit bonuses for long service and some other payments," RIA said.

Regular monthly salaries, pensions and allowances would continue to be paid.

The Russian parliament decided last month to give the Russian central bank control of money supply on the republic's territory.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin said at the weekend that the republic would take on responsibility for meeting all essential Soviet budget obligations.

Russia has absorbed most of the Soviet central administration, including the finance ministry and the state bank, Gosbank.

Soviet money supply is expected to rise to 236 billion rubles (about \$400 billion) by the end of this year from 136 billion (\$230 billion) at the end of 1990.

New economic policy prompts Turkish banks to cut interest rates on deposits

ANKARA (R) — Turkish banks began cutting deposit interests in anticipation of lower yields from public borrowing instruments.

State-run Sumerbank has reduced its rates from Monday by one to two percentage points, the latest in a series of rate cuts four small-scale banks.

The government programme, unveiled last week, promised curbs on public borrowing that are expected to lower interest rates, in a move designed to enliven the stagnant economy.

Current one-year deposit interest rates range between 70 and 79 per cent. Annual inflation was 66.5 per cent in October.

"The government's economic targets show that interest rates will fall next year. We didn't want to borrow with 'high-cost' time deposits under these circumstances," Ersin Tekoz, assistant general manager of Denizbank, told Reuters.

Denizbank reduced its one-year quotes last week by five points to 74 per cent.

Mr. Tekoz said 1992 would be the year of stable economic policies aimed at curbing cost-push inflation.

"We expect that the rates will fall gradually and slowly," said an Istanbul banker who asked not to be named. Her bank is still giving one of the highest rates. "We are waiting for the large banks to make a move."

She said rate cuts could gain momentum in 1992.

"Nobody wants to carry the burden of high deposit costs. But we also don't want to see our deposits diminish just before

year-end closing," she said.

In September, the leading banks raised time-deposit rates by up to 10 points in line with rises in inflation and yields on treasury bills and government bonds.

But the returns on weekly treasury auctions and central bank's open market sales have been falling since Monday of last week, when the new government programme was presented to parliament.

"Large private and public banks await this week's six-monthly T-bill auction. If the downward trend continues this week, they will probably pull down their rates," said the treasurer of a foreign bank in Istanbul.

Turkish bankers support a rate cut to lessen the burden of high rates on the economy and industry.

"The decline in interest rates will boost the economy as it will lower lending costs," Nuri Dogulu, general manager of the state-run Turkish Development Bank, said.

Meanwhile, Turkey's economy minister is out to "break the devil's legs" in his struggle to stop state-run enterprises from crippling the country's finances.

Tansu Ciller, 44, is preparing economic reforms to curb inflation fuelled by huge losses made by state firms accounting for two-fifths of the national economy.

Mr. Ciller, a former economics professor, became state minister in a coalition government formed by Suleyman Demirel last month.

"Our economic reform programme will be a historic cornerstone," she told weekly Ekonomik Panorama.

A newcomer to politics, Ms. Ciller has worked for two years with other academics, bankers and industrialists on a package she plans to launch on Dec. 10. Few details have emerged.

"We have a unique chance," she said of the alliance formed by Mr. Demirel's centre-right True Path Party and Erdal Inonu's Social Democrat Populist Party after the Oct. 20 election.

Ms. Ciller inherits a near-record foreign exchange balance of \$12 billion and a foreign debt of about \$44 billion.

The expected \$35 million current account deficit is much lower than the \$2.4 billion forecast at the start of the year. Exports are expected to total \$14.6 billion, up 10 per cent over last year, according to official figures.

But inflation and corruption have clouded the domestic picture. Mr. Demirel named Orhan Kilerioglu as state minister to pursue financial irregularities and institute reforms.

A senior treasury official said Ms. Ciller would be told drastic action was needed to shut down unprofitable state companies and sell off the rest of the economy back on its feet.

Their losses, expected to top 13 trillion lira (\$2.6 billion) in 1991, strain fiscal policy, push up interest rates and contribute to inflation running at an annual 67 per cent.

Ms. Ciller described the losses of the state sector as "the devil's

legs which must be broken."

She plans to incorporate all state companies, give them better management and then privatise most of them.

State banks and mining and manufacturing companies, some of them created under Turkey's first president Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the 1930s, are commonly overstuffed and inefficient.

Wages account for 44 per cent of their spending.

Turkish steel workers produce little more than a quarter of the output of their counterparts in western Europe.

Any rationalisation is likely to push thousands of people out of work, a political risk which the government, especially its Social Democrat wing, may be wary of running.

Mr. Inonu's party has in the past defended Ataturk's legacy of a major state role in big industries and last year blocked the sale of a state airline caterer in the courts.

Even Mr. Demirel's party challenged the sell-off of five cement plants in 1990 because they were sold to foreign buyers.

The Istanbul Stock Exchange has boomed in the last two weeks on hopes aroused by the new government, but brokers say there is little underlying appetite for flotations of state-owned firms.

Shares of companies privatised under the previous Motherland Party government have performed poorly. Brokers say the market was unable to absorb shares dumped to boost government revenue.

Dollar rises nearly 100% at Moscow banks

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet ruble plunged almost 100 per cent against the dollar at Moscow commercial banks Monday after restrictions on the exchange rate were lifted.

The Soviet state bank, Gosbank, Friday lifted the fixed tourist exchange rate and Soviet banks were free from Monday to set their own rates for buying hard currency from tourists and selling it to Soviet citizens travelling abroad.

The decision was dictated by Gosbank's inability to maintain the rate of 47 to the dollar as the ruble steadily lost its value at currency auctions and on the black market.

Several commercial banks authorised to deal in hard currency grabbed the opportunity to set the rate at about 80 rubles, close

to the price of a dollar at the black market.

But restrictions remained on the purchase of dollars, eliminating any opportunities for quick-money arbitrage.

One commercial bank announced plans to offer more than 100 rubles for a dollar — close to the rates at commercial auctions open to organisations but not to individuals.

"The decision of Gosbank to lift restrictions was absolutely correct. Nobody was selling us hard currency recently and the demand for it was very high," said an official with Moscow Sberbank, offering 80 rubles to the dollar.

The Soviet bank for foreign economic relations, Vneshekonombank, appeared reluctant to set any rate and its exchange

offices remained closed in Moscow.

Vneshekonombank's indecision might be linked to uncertainty over repayment of the Soviet foreign debt, estimated at some \$70 billion, for which it is responsible.

Leaders of republican governments are expected to meet Tuesday to discuss division of the Soviet foreign debt.

The Russian parliament recently announced plans to take over Gosbank and Vneshekonombank by the end of the year.

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Ukraine votes for independence, elects Kravchuk president

KIEV, Soviet Union (R) — The Ukraine has voted by a stunning margin of almost nine to one to leave the Soviet Union and elected Leonid Kravchuk as its president, preliminary election results showed Monday.

Mr. Kravchuk, a 57-year-old former Communist Party ideologist, swept to victory in the first round against five other candidates with 60 per cent of the vote, parliamentary official Nikolai Khramenko told a group of foreign election observers.

A few minutes earlier Mr. Kravchuk himself told the observers that 90 per cent of those who voted in Sunday's referendum gave their support to a declaration of independence, proclaimed by the Ukrainian parliament last August.

Preliminary results read on local radio by an electoral commission official put the figure at around 85 per cent. They said all districts, even those with big Russian majorities, voted "yes".

"A new Ukraine" has been born. It is a great historic moment," Kravchuk declared to applause from the observers, who said Sunday's voting had been peaceful and fair.

"The main thing now is to unite around the idea of independence," Mr. Kravchuk said. He promised that the Ukraine would give priority to relations with Russia, its largest and dominant neighbour.

Ukraine has been effectively ruled from Moscow since the two countries were linked by treaty in 1954. Its secession is likely to be far more of a psychological shock to Russia than the loss of the three tiny Baltic states.

It also raises fresh concerns over possible confrontation between the two biggest Soviet republics over their far-from-stable borders. Russian President Boris Yeltsin has already warned a Ukrainian break with the union could prompt a "review" of present boundaries.

Turnout in the voting was 83.7 per cent, indicating a substantial overall majority of the 37.5 million electorate in favour of secession, even including those who stayed at home.

The result was a big setback for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Ukraine to take part in a new union of sovereign states.

Mr. Kravchuk told the observers that Western countries will have conditionally promised full diplomatic recognition if the referendum supported independence should now take concrete steps.

Ivan Drach, chairman of the opposition Rukh Movement, told a reporter: "The main thing is we won the referendum." Mr. Drach's Movement supported the main opposition presidential candidate Vyacheslav Chornovil.

The majority in favour of independence was well over 90 per cent in the strongly nationalist west Ukraine, falling to around 70 per cent in the highly industrialised Donetsk region and 54 per cent in the Crimea, where many Russian-speakers favour a reunion of their peninsula with Russia.

Kravchuk said the Crimean majority for independence, though narrow, was enough to end arguments about the future of the territory.

The lowest-pro-independence vote was in the Crimean naval port of Sevastopol, where only 36 per cent supported independence.

Several leading politicians said it was likely Mr. Kravchuk would now form a new government including figures from the democratic opposition to replace the cabinet of Prime Minister Vitold Fokin.

Mr. Fokin, appointed just over a year ago, has been much criticised by parliament for being too keen to sign agreement with Moscow and too cautious over economic reform.

Mr. Kravchuk, in his meeting with the observers, appeared to rule out fresh elections to parliament, saying agreement on a new constitution and electoral law, and the implementation of economic reforms, should take priority.

Nazarbayev wins in Kazakhstan

Meanwhile in Alma-Ata, Nursultan Nazarbayev emerged triumphant from Kazakhstan's first presidential poll Monday, saying he was ready for complete autonomy if Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to build a new confederation failed.

Officials' results showed 98.8 per cent who took part in Sunday's elections endorsed Mr. Nazarbayev, the only candidate.

"I will fight to maintain the Union of Sovereign States. If this does not work out then we ourselves must be prepared for total autonomy," he told Reuters.

Kazakhstan is among seven republics to have backed in principle President Gorbachev's efforts to salvage a Union of Sovereign States from the ruins of the old centralised Soviet Union. But Republican leaders balked last week at initialising the agreement, referring it back to their parliaments.

Mr. Nazarbayev told a news conference in the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata that recent events showed complete autonomy for the republic could not be excluded. But he saw independence differently to the Ukraine — as autonomy within a confederation.

He said people had voted for independence and not to split from the union. These, he said, were "two different things."

If republics did become totally autonomous they would need to sign agreements with each other saving key economic links.

Kazakhstan, one of only two republics not to declare independence after last August's coup, has substantial reserves of gold, silver and industrial diamonds.

It covers an area stretching from traditional Muslim regions near the Chinese border to overwhelmingly Russian districts where the Volga River flows into the Caspian Sea.

Mr. Nazarbayev had said the polls would show whether Kazakhstan's ethnic mix of Kazakhs and Russians supported his far-reaching plans for a transition to a market economy.

"We now have the mandate to act more decisively. People see there is a way forward, although there will be great difficulties," he said.

Khmer Rouge wants more U.N. troops in Cambodia

PATTAYA, Thailand (R) — The Khmer Rouge demanded Monday that 800 more U.N. peacekeeping soldiers be deployed immediately in Phnom Penh or its leaders could not return there to participate in the Cambodian peace process.

The radical group, whose leaders were forced to flee the Cambodian capital last Wednesday ahead of an angry mob, also demanded that Kor Teah, a Khmer Rouge employee left behind, be accounted for.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, acknowledged by all factions as Cambodia's head of state, told reporters Monday: "Mr. Khieu Samphan and Mr. Son Sen have just set two conditions for their return to Phnom Penh."

The prince is in this Thai resort as chairman of Cambodia's U.N.-mandated Supreme National Council (SNC), a reconciliation body in which power is shared by the Vietnam-installed Phnom Penh government and the Khmer Rouge-dominated three-party guerrilla alliance.

The leaders of all the factions are gathering to hold an SNC meeting that could not be held in Phnom Penh because of the violence directed at Mr. Khieu Samphan, nominal president of the Khmer Rouge, and Mr. Son Sen, its defence chief.

"Eight hundred men from UNTAC (the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia), now, this month" was how Prince Sihanouk expressed the Maoist group's first demand.

They also wanted the return of their missing comrade, he said. "Kor Teah must be found and sent to the Khmer Rouge zone," Prince Sihanouk said.

The prince, former titular head of the guerrilla alliance who now says he is neutral, quoted Phnom Penh Premier Hun Sen as saying Monday the missing Khmer Rouge man had "disappeared."

Earlier in the day, Phnom Penh Defence Minister Tie Banh said the Khmer Rouge would be permitted to bring more security troops into the Cambodian capital because of the assault.

"If they are not satisfied with our police forces they can ask for the protection from any forces they like, from UNTAC, from UNAMIC, or even increase their own security forces," he told Reuters.

UNAMIC, the U.N. Advance Mission in Cambodia, has 200 peacekeeping soldiers in Cambodia, a vanguard for a 12,000-strong UNTAC force that will supervise elections to end decades of civil war and political turmoil.

Mr. Khieu Samphan and Mr. Son Sen were forced to flee Cambodia when a mob attacked the Phnom Penh guest house in which they were staying.

Mr. Khieu Samphan, who is believed to still report to "brother number one" Pol Pot, was slightly injured.

Mr. Khieu Samphan and Mr. Son Sen had promised leadership roles in the 1975-1979 Khmer Rouge rule of Cambodia, the "killing field" years when a million Cambodians lost their lives to murder, forced labour and starvation.

Mr. Tie Banh said additional Khmer Rouge fighters permitted back into Phnom Penh would have to follow strict guidelines.

"If they increase the security force we have to make it clear it is for a specific role, that the role is only for the protection of their leaders and they must confine themselves to certain locations," he said.

EC restores aid to most Yugoslav republics

BRUSSELS (R) — European Community (EC) foreign ministers agreed Monday to scrap sanctions against all Yugoslav republics except Serbia and its ally Montenegro, Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens said.

He told reporters that ministers decided to restore trade and financial help for Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina.

"It would be paradoxical to continue sanctions against republics that are behaving well," Mr. Eyskens said.

Mr. Eyskens said the question of diplomatic recognition of republics judged to be helping peace efforts was not covered by Monday's decision but would be discussed at next week's EC summit in Maastricht.

He said Greece had opposed the formula for singling out Serbia and Montenegro by excluding them from positive measures.

France also had reservations, preferring to wait the outcome of the latest peace efforts by U.N. special envoy Cyrus Vance.

Mr. Eyskens said the aid measures for republics would include restoring of trade preferences, 200 million ECUs (\$250 million) in financial help and other benefits under the EC's phrase programme to aid Eastern Europe.

The Community imposed sanctions on the whole of Yugoslavia three weeks ago to try to force the warring parties to respect a ceasefire. But the EC countries said then they would look at ways to reward those parties which were blameless.

Meanwhile, sporadic fighting erupted in breakthrough Croatia Monday as Mr. Vance was due to start talks on the deployment of peacekeeping troops in Yugoslavia, Croatian radio said.

Mr. Vance flew into Belgrade Sunday to try to forge agreement between Serbia, the Yugoslav army and Croatia on how and where to deploy peacekeeping troops if the latest ceasefire succeeds in ending five months of bloodshed.

The former U.S. Secretary of State was due to meet Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Federal Defence Minister Veljko Kadijevic in Belgrade.

But Croatian radio said the Croat-held city of Osijek was shelled overnight and two people were killed. It said the southern and eastern outskirts of the city in eastern Croatia were hit.

Thousands of people have been killed since Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia in June and its Serbian minority rebelled. A week-old ceasefire has eased the fighting but has failed to end it.

Asked if the U.N. would deploy a peacekeeping force in Yugoslavia, Mr. Vance told Reuters as he headed for talks with Gen. Kadijevic: "It's much too early to say."

"I am distressed that no great progress has been made," Mr. Vance said after his arrival in Belgrade Sunday, indicating obstacles remained to the deployment of a peacekeeping force.

The U.N. says the 14th ceasefire since fighting began must hold if peacekeeping troops are to be sent to Yugoslavia.

Mr. Vance said the warring sides must also agree on how and where to station them before he can recommend their deployment to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who will advise the Security Council whether to deploy the troops.

He also said the removal of federal soldiers from bases in Croatia, a key clause in the ceasefire agreement, had been progressing slowly.

Togo army resumes siege of premier's residence

LOME (R) — Soldiers trying to oust Togo's civilian government resumed their siege of Prime Minister Joseph Kokou Koffigoh's residence in the capital Lome Monday.

The army, which has occupied the radio building in the small West African country since last Thursday, said troops had taken up positions around the residence and other key points.

"None of our demands has been met up to now," an army communiqué broadcast over the radio said.

Sources inside Mr. Koffigoh's residence, contacted by telephone, said many soldiers backed by tanks and armoured vehicles deployed around the colonial-style mansion before dawn under cover of a night curfew.

"They are all around us with tanks," one source said. "The communiqué repeated earlier demands for Togo's transitional legislature, the High Council of the Republic (HCR), to be dissolved."

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Australia: 'Highly excessive' force used in East Timor

CANBERRA (R) — Australia's Foreign Minister accused Indonesian troops Monday of using "highly excessive" force during the Nov. 12 army shooting in East Timor.

Senior official John McCarthy was giving evidence to a parliamentary committee investigating the shooting, which sparked an international outcry.

He said troops fired no warning shots and made no attempt to disperse the crowd by more conventional means. He said soldiers appeared to start firing almost as soon as they arrived.

Australia has been among the most vocal critics of the shooting. A spokesman for Prime Minister Bob Hawke said Mr. Hawke would meet five members of an East Timorese delegation Tuesday.

Australia has estimated 75 people were killed when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on the crowd of 3,500 mourners marching in a cemetery in the East Timorese capital Dili to mourn the previous

killings of an independence sympathiser.

Indonesian authorities say 19 died and 91 were wounded in the former Portuguese colony they annexed in 1976.

Both Muntz, an official of the charity Australian community Aid Abroad, witnessed the massacre. He told the committee there had been an overwhelming military presence in Dili during his stay, creating a climate of "extreme fear."

Mr. Muntz said he had been reluctant to attend the march but he and several foreign journalists had agreed to go to try to stop soldiers attacking the demonstrators.

His interpreter, New Zealander Kamal Bamadaj, was among those killed.

In Jakarta, the Indonesia News Agency, Antara, said Monday the aid agency may have instigated the incident. Quoting unnamed sources, it said the charity "should be investigating for its involvement in the Nov. 12 massacre in Dili."

In Japan, a poster showing a naked woman inside a condom sparked controversy. The Society for Women of Action said the poster, bearing the caption "thin but strong enough for AIDS," depicted women as sex objects or prostitutes.

Newspapers reported that one railway company refused to display it because it could be a bad influence on children.

Russia to recognise Ukraine's independence — Kravchuk

KIEV (R) — Russia will recognise the Ukraine as an independent state very soon, President-elect Leonid Kravchuk said Monday.

Mr. Kravchuk, in his first interview after Sunday's election and independence referendum, told Reuters:

"In the very near future Russia will recognise the Ukraine, 100 per cent."

Asked if he had a concrete promise from Russian President Boris Yeltsin he replied: "I am 100 per cent sure. You can believe me."

The European Community (EC) called on the Ukraine Monday to respect Soviet international commitments on debt and nuclear arms if it secedes from the Soviet Union as a result of its independent referendum.

Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek said the 12 EC states were urging Ukrainian authorities "to do nothing which might call into question the Ukraine's control over nuclear weapons."

But the EC foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels, stopped well short of even mentioning possible recognition of the Ukraine as a separate state after centuries of Kremlin rule.

Official said the 12 countries had agreed beforehand to refrain from mentioning recognition until Ukrainian intentions became clearer and a possible solution was found to the problem of minorities in the Crimea.

Apart from calling on Ukrainian authorities to respect their share of the Soviet Union's commitments on foreign debt and arms control, the EC said they must ensure they respect human rights and the rights of minorities.

"Here we are flagging out four detailed areas," a British official said. "All that has to happen significantly before people start talking about recognition."

Meanwhile, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow said Sunday that Washington would not immediately recognise the Ukraine as an independent country.

But Ambassador Robert Strauss predicted that the Soviet Union, which he said was economically "somewhere between unbelievably poor and worse," would be an entirely different kind of association within a year.

In a wide-ranging interview from Moscow with CBS Television, Mr. Strauss called the Soviet Union "a young democracy that is fighting and trying to find itself."

He said reports that Washington planned immediate recognition of the Ukraine within a few days of Sunday's independence referendum "in my judgment, just won't happen."

'Army in Punjab for Pakistan war'

NEW DELHI (R) — The massive deployment of the Indian army in Punjab is not meant to provide security for elections in the troubled state but to prepare for war with Pakistan, a prominent Sikh leader charged Monday.

Simranjit Singh Mann, leader of the Shiromani Akali Dal Party, called Punjab polls expected in January a "ruse, a feint to induct the army for elections and then leap-frog for a military adventure into Pakistan."

Punjab state officials said 50,000 fresh troops have been deployed in Punjab with police

powers, including detention without judicial approval, in preparation for state assembly elections in the second half of January.

Mr. Mann told reporters that three army corps — each with a strength of 60,000 troops — had been sent to augment the three corps deployed in Punjab, where Delhi has battled a bloody Sikh insurgency for a decade.

Information about the army's deployment came from a senior army officer in Punjab's capital, Chandigarh, his aides said.

Mr. Mann said the army had taken over hospitals and schools

in Punjab as barracks for the fresh troops. "For balloting you don't need tanks and heavy artillery," he said.

"Instead of elections there will be war. (The polls) are a gimmick, a ruse," said Mr. Mann, a former senior policeman released in 1989 after four years in jail without trial on charges he conspired to kill former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

His party won nine of 13 parliamentary seats at stake in the 1989 elections just before he was released.

India mines Kashmir border with Pakistan

SRINAGAR (R) — The Indian army said Monday it had laid mines along its Kashmir frontier with Pakistan to prevent infiltration by Muslim militants.

An official announcement, broadcast on state radio, warned people living near the frontier to keep out of the mined areas.

Officials said this was the first time the frontier had been mined in peacetime.

India accuses Pakistan of arming, training and directing militants who operate in Indian-ruled Kashmir. Islamabad denies the charges.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, two of them over Kashmir, two thirds of which is ruled by India and the

rest by Pakistan.

Tensions between the two countries are high because of the separatist revolt in Indian-ruled Kashmir.

Kashmiri militants Monday accused the army of killing 24 civilians in the border district of Baramulla in a week-long operation.

Several groups declared a general strike in the Kashmir Valley in protest. They said 24 militants had also died in encounters with the army in border areas last week.

Meanwhile, Indian police said Monday they believed Sikh militants were behind an attempt to blow up a packed Air India jet.

A bomb was found shortly before the plane carrying 398 passengers and 18 crew was due to take off from Delhi for London and New York Sunday.

"We have homed in on a suspect and we are interrogating him. He is linked to the Punjab militants," a senior police official told Reuters.

The official, who asked not be identified, said the man was a Sikh airport worker with access to the Boeing 747 but would give few further details.

The crude petrol bomb was found in a food trolley when an alert steward noticed that a security seal fixed to the trolley by the airline caterer had been broken.

The plane originally set off from Madras.

Kenya to allow multi-party politics

NAIROBI (R) — Leaders of Kenya's ruling party decided at a meeting Monday to allow multi-party politics in the East African country, senior party sources said.

"The national governing council decided on allowing multi-party politics," a senior source in

the ruling Kenya African National Council (KANU) told Reuters, adding that the decision was reached after intense debate.

The decision, which comes amid intense pressure on President Daniel Arap Moi for political reform, was expected to be put to a meeting of national delegates

Tuesday.

Kenya, a former British colony, has been an official one-party state since constitutional amendment "2A" was passed by parliament in 1982 outlawing opposition. But KANU has enjoyed an effective monopoly on power since independence in 1963.

World AIDS Day focuses on preventing disease from spreading

GENEVA (R) — The world marked its fourth annual AIDS Day by trying to focus the minds of millions across the globe on threatened catastrophe from the killer disease.

People in more than 160 countries gave their support to the fight against AIDS in media interviews, silent processions, pop concerts and fund-raising soccer matches.

In New York and San Francisco, the U.S. cities hardest hit by the deadly virus, major buildings were turned off their lights Sunday night in remembrances of more than 100,000 Americans who have been killed by AIDS.

Some 7,500 people raised more than \$1.5 million to fight AIDS at a dance marathon at a New York convention centre, which was turned into a cacophonous discotheque.

In what was billed as "a day without art" and organised in remembrance of artists and entertainers felled by AIDS, the

Museum of Modern Art displayed a roomful of empty frames as speakers, including Mayor David Dinkins, read out a list of the dead.

Mr. Dinkins said the AIDS epidemic had received "tragically insufficient" attention from the U.S. government.

At Manhattan's Riverside Church, a bell tolled every 10 minutes for the dead.

In San Francisco, where the fatal disease already has killed more than 7,000 people, many of them in the city's large homosexual community, AIDS Day organisers planned to turn off lights that illuminate more than a dozen landmarks, such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Davies Symphony Hall.

Maureen Keefe, one of the organisers, also asked individuals to dim the lights in their homes for 15 minutes as a symbol of the human lives lost to AIDS.

"It will be a metaphor for the

losses we had due to AIDS," said Ms. Keefe. "Re-illumination of the lights will provide a sense of hope and an acknowledgement of the further fight against the disease."

Figures from the Geneva-based World Health Organisation (WHO) show that nine to 10 million people worldwide are infected by the HIV virus which causes the disease. About 1.5 million have full-blown AIDS.

To alert public awareness to the disease, health campaigners gave pride of place to the condom, regarded by many as still the best defence against the spread of AIDS. WHO has sent thousands of condoms in special "safe sex" key-rings to its staff around the world.

By the end of the century, WHO predicts 30-40 million people will be infected with the virus. Up to 18 million will have had their immune systems attacked by the disease.

The first chapel in Britain especially for praying for people affected by HIV and AIDS, the chapel of St Andrew, was opened

at southwark cathedral, London.

In India, a group of prostitutes' children waving banners saying "don't give AIDS to our mothers" distributed free condoms outside Bombay's largest railway station.

"India may be sitting on an AIDS volcano that will soon erupt, engulfing millions," said I.S. Gilada, secretary of the health group which organised the rally.

In Africa, where seven million people including nearly a million children are believed to be infected, politicians called for more open discussion of the disease.

Teachers, politicians, churchmen, doctors, parents, brothers and sisters must all share information on AIDS, discuss it and teach about it," said Kenyan Health Minister Mwai Kibaki.

Rwanda's health minister warned in a similar message that someone contracts AIDS every 90 minutes in Kigali, the capital

of the tiny central African nation.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said Ugandans should not shun AIDS victims, but should care for them in the community and treat them as individuals.

In some countries, campaigners found the AIDS prevention message difficult to spread.

Only about 1,000 people turned out for a parade through central Paris to mark World AIDS Day despite heavy media coverage in preceding days about the disease.

In Japan, a poster showing a naked woman inside a condom sparked controversy. The Society for Women of Action said the poster, bearing the caption "thin but strong enough for AIDS," depicted women as sex objects or prostitutes.

Newspapers reported that one railway company refused to display it because it could be a bad influence on children.

COLUMN

Shanghai reports 1st 4 AIDS patients

HONG KONG (R) — Four Shanghai residents have developed AIDS this year, the first report of the fatal disease in China's biggest city, the China News Service said Monday. China has monitored more than 80,000 suspected acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) carriers since 1985 but none were from Shanghai, the Peking-funded news service said.

City health authorities have taken precautions against the spread of the disease, including setting up a laboratory to vet all imported blood for hospital use, it said.

Last month, Peking opened its first AIDS clinic, offering tests, treatment and counselling for patients. According to the Ministry of Public Health, 615 people had tested HIV-positive and eight have developed symptoms of the disease since 1985. Most of the known AIDS patients in China are drug addicts in Yunnan province, neighbouring Burma which is part of the notorious Golden Triangle opium-producing belt.

Brazil's president launches campaign to fight AIDS

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (R) — President Fernando Collor de Mello named soccer star Pele to head Brazil's fight against AIDS and warned that eight million Brazilians could be infected with the HIV virus by the year 2000.

In a televised speech, Mr. Collor de Mello launched a government programme to combat the disease and announced that Pele will head a national Commission for the Prevention and Fight Against AIDS. In Brazil, which has 155 million people, 21,000 have AIDS and more than 500,000 are infected with the HIV virus, the Health Ministry estimates. "This is a war that must be won," Mr. Collor said. "The lack of information is the first obstacle to be overcome." Without a national educational programme and preventive measures, it is estimated that eight million people in Brazil will be infected by the year 2000, he said. "Even so, it is probable we will get to the year 2000 with two million sick," Mr. Collor de Mello said. He said the AIDS campaign will be decentralised by setting up local commissions in 3,000 cities.

member slashes wrist in suicide bid